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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a study that examined the relationship between teacher control and school environment. Data were obtained from the nationally representative 1988 Schools and Staffing Survey, collected by the United States Department of Education. The sample consists of 24,480 secondary school teachers and 5,292 secondary school administrators. The analysis focused on teachers' reported control over the areas of instruction, tracking and discipline, and both teachers' and administrators' reports of the degree of conflict between students, teachers, and administrators in schools. Findings indicate that levels of teacher control were significantly associated with levels of school conflict. However, the direction and strength of the relationship depended on the area of teacher control. In particular, the results draw attention to the importance of teacher influence on tracking and discipline rather than instructional decision making for creating a cohesive school environment. Two figures and three tables are included. (Contains 70 references.) (LMI)

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ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT AND CONTROL IN HIGH SCHOOLS[1]

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ABSTRACT

Does the organizational control of teachers and their work in schools have beneficial or negative consequences for the behavior and performance of teachers and students? Is it a source of coherence and consensus or does it promote discontent and undermine a sense of community? This paper addresses the debate over the degree to which teachers ought to exercise or, alternatively, be subject to control.

The data used come from the nationally representative 1988 Schools and Staffing Survey, collected by the U.S. Department of Education. The sample consists of 24,480 secondary school teachers and 5,292 secondary school administrators. The analysis focusses on teachers' reported control over the areas of instruction, tracking and discipline and both teachers' and administrators' reports of the degree of conflict between students, teachers and administrators in schools.

The results indicate that levels of teacher control are significantly associated with levels of school conflict, after controlling for a number of background characteristics of schools, students and staffs. But, they also indicate that the direction and strength of the relationship depends on the area of teacher control. In particular, the results draw attention to the importance of teacher influence over tracking and discipline in comparison to instructional decisions for a cohesive school environment.

The importance of the degree of the organizational control of teachers and their work in schools has become increasingly recognized among both education researchers and policy makers over the past decade. For researchers, a continuing interest in the quality of schools themselves, as opposed to those of students or staffs, has lead to increasing attention to the organizational structure of schools and in particular, to their degree of centralization or decentralization. For policy makers, the growing national interest in school-based management, school choice and teacher empowerment has lead to increasing attention to the nature and consequences of decision making and management within schools.

However, although the subject of organizational control in schools has become of great interest and importance, it is marked by substantial disagreement over the degree to which schools and teachers should be controlled. This paper addresses this debate by comparing and testing its two most prominent and contradictory viewpoints.

Traditionally, a large number of policy makers and researchers have held schools to be the epitome of inefficient public sector institutions. This view holds that schools, in particular, lack appropriate levels of control, coordination and accountability, especially when it comes to their primary productive activity - the work of teachers. In this traditional control view, school systems are too disordered, under-controlled and overly decentralized.

There is, however, a second and antithetical view of the organization and structure of schools. This view, popular among a different group of policy makers and researchers, finds schools to be the epitome of top-down undemocratic bureaucracies. Recently, a growing group has extended this argument specifically to the working conditions of teachers - arguing that

factory-like schools unduly de-professionalize and disempower teachers. In this newer empowerment view, school systems are overly controlled and overly centralized.

Both of these perspectives show substantial empirical support, both offer policy agendas and both have fostered numerous reform measures. But, although many have drawn attention to the dissimilarity of these two views there has been little effort to explain the simultaneous presence of contradictory and polar views, nor to directly compare or test them. It is the objective of this paper to address this debate over the degree to which teachers either ought to exercise or, alternatively, be subject to greater control.

The organization of this paper is as follows:

The following section describes in more detail each of the two polar views of organizational control in schools. I show that the differing conclusions of each partly derive from implicit differences in emphasis. Each begins with contrasting assumptions concerning how to both assess and evaluate organizational control in schools and each subsequently arrives at opposing views of how controlled schools both are and should be. The discussion here suggests that both are partly correct, but that neither goes far enough.

The second section introduces the data and methods to be used in this investigation. The data come from the 1988 Schools and Staffing Survey, a large, comprehensive nationally representative survey of school teachers and administrators conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education.

The third section subsequently turns to the core of this investigation - a multivariate analysis of the relationship between organizational control and organizational behavior in schools. In particular, the analysis specifies which

areas of control in schools effect which domains of the behavior of those within schools. Three distinct areas of control exercised by teachers over the educational and productive core of schools are distinguished - instruction, tracking and discipline activities. Three distinct domains of interactive behavior in schools are distinguished - between students and staff, among teachers and between teachers and administrators.

The results of the analysis indicate that organizational control does indeed make a difference for behavior within schools, but the effects very much depend on which areas of control and which domains of behavior are examined. In particular, this investigation draws attention to the importance of the degree of faculty influence over decisions and policies concerned with the oft overlooked, normative, social and behavioral dimensions of the educational process.

1. BACKGROUND

Traditionally, studies of teachers' work and educational organization have found schools to be an unusual case of modern organization and teaching an unusual type of occupation. Schools, researchers have argued, exhibit an exceptional degree of "structural looseness," because of the incompatibility of educating children and formal bureaucratization (Bidwell 1965; Lortie 1969, 1975; Dreeben 1976). Among those who study occupations, work and organizations in general, this theme has been reformulated and made the core of one of the more prominent contemporary perspectives within this interdisciplinary field. This perspective focuses on organizations characterized by an inordinate lack of coordination, control, consensus and accountability. Such researchers developed a colorful vocabulary to describe these settings. Schools, they have held, are the archetype of such "loosely coupled systems" and "organized anarchies" (Cohen, March and Olsen 1972; March and Olsen 1976; Meyer and Scott 1983;

Weick 1976).

As a result, until very recently, it has been conventional wisdom among both organizational and educational researchers that schools are highly decentralized organizations and that the teaching occupation, although in many ways not a self-regulating profession, is characterized by a great deal of workplace autonomy and discretion (Firestone 1985; Tyler 1988).

Beginning in the early 1980's, the organization of schools and the working environment of teachers also surfaced as a key issue in the arena of educational policy and reform. Despite the contradictory findings of that decade's numerous commissions, national studies and reports, there arose a general consensus that the work of teachers is at the heart of the current educational crisis (Weis et al. 1989; Bacharach 1990). While the research community has differed over the implications of loose structuring for school and teacher performance, those participating in this policy and reform debate tended, initially, to assume that a major factor in the educational crisis has been under-coordinated and under-managed schools. Successful reform, they have thus argued, must focus on greater accountability, higher standards, top-down state controls, national goals and a "tightening of the ship" (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983; Goodlad 1985; Kirst 1989).

There is, however, a second and antithetical view of school organization, that is also perennially popular, but among a different group of education reformers, policy makers and researchers. Schools are not too decentralized, this alternative perspective holds, but exactly the opposite. Highly bureaucratized school systems have become stultifying, rigid and unresponsive and, this viewpoint argues, schools have become the epitome of the modern centralized undemocratic bureaucracy (Conley and Cooper 1991). More than one version of

this anti-bureaucracy viewpoint has appeared. One version focusses on community and client control and makes the argument that local constituencies and parents do not have adequate input into their children's and community's schools. This theme is traditional to American education and resurfaces on a regular basis (Katz 1972; 1987). For instance, in the late 1960's and early 1970's, numerous reform groups sought to reform schools by implementing community control (e.g. Rogers 1968; Ravitch 1974; Fantini et al. 1979; Borman and Spring 1984) or by institutionalizing increased student input into school affairs (Kozol 1967). More recently, advocates of school "choice" reforms have adopted the same arguments and rhetoric - that powerful central school boards deny parents any voice in their children's education (Clune and Witte 1990).

This version of school decentralization, ironically, often advocates reform measures similar to those offered by the traditional control viewpoint. For instance, the objective of much of the choice movement is often to increase the accountability of schools and teachers by shifting substantial control from school staffs to parents and communities.

Nevertheless, community control is often confused with a different and newer version of the anti-bureaucracy viewpoint. Over the past several years, reformers and researchers alike have extended and applied this critique specifically to the working conditions of teachers. Factory-like schools, this group holds, unduly de-professionalize, disempower and de-motivate teachers. In this new and developing view, schools and teachers are overly controlled - a situation both dissatisfying to teachers and a source of school inefficiency and ineffectiveness (e.g. Bacharach et al. 1988; Rosenholtz 1989; Corcoran et al. 1988; Shedd and Bacharach 1991; Johnson 1990). Typically, this viewpoint advocates forms of decentralization, such as school-based management, that are designed

to increase the authority, autonomy and professionalism of teachers (Carnegie Forum 1986; Holmes Group 1986; Weis et al. 1989).

While the argument that overly centralized organizational structures have a negative impact on employee behavior and attitudes is relatively new to educational research and reform, it has, however, like the traditional control perspective, an established place within the more general field of organizational and occupational studies. Applied researchers in this field have long advocated the efficacy of job redesign, employee empowerment and participative management for improving the quality of worklife and productivity in a range of work settings. The distinguishing feature of this line of research is its humanistic orientation and its focus on the role of organizational structures, rather than the attributes of individual members, in seeking to explain problems in organizations (e.g. Burns and Stalker 1961; Turner and Lawrence 1964; Likert 1967, Porter, Lawler and Hackman 1975; Kanter 1977, Tannenbaum et al. 1974, Berg 1978; Walton 1980).

As a result of these changes in the realms of both education policy and research, there is now considerable debate over the degree to which teachers and their work should be controlled. The traditional control perspective finds school faculties to lack sufficient accountability, and hence, seeks to increase the organizational control <u>of</u> teachers. The newer empowerment perspective finds school faculties to be overly constrained, and hence, seeks to increase the control exercised <u>by</u> teachers.

But, although many have drawn attention to the dissimilarity of these two polar perspectives (see, for instance, Rowan 1990 and Kirst 1989), there has been little effort to empirically test which viewpoint is more valid - the objective of this paper.

I begin by reviewing how these two polar perspectives both assess and evaluate organizational control in schools. A close examination of this research indicates that each view comes to very different conclusions because each begins with very different emphases.

A.) Assessing Organizational Control in Schools

Assessments of organizational control typically focus on two critical questions: First, what are the key processes and activities within an organization? Second, which groups or members control decisions and policies concerned with these activities?

Research on the organization of schools, whether representing the traditional control perspective or the newer empowerment perspective, commonly subscribes to what has been labelled the zone view of school structure. In this view, school processes and activities are divided into two separate zones. The school-wide zone consists of administrative activities: the area of school coordination, management, planning and resource allocation. The classroom zone consists of teaching and educational activities - often referred to as the technical or productive core (see Figure 1).

Where the two perspectives of school control differ is in deciding which is the most important zone and set of activities to emphasize. The traditional viewpoint draws attention to the control of the educational zone. Hence, when these researchers analyze how centralized or decentralized schools are, they commonly ask, how much influence teachers have over educational matters within classrooms? They find teachers to have high levels of control over many issues of classroom instruction and, hence, conclude schools are decentralized (e.g. Meyer and Scott 1983; Lortie 1975; Firestone 1985).

The newer disempowerment perspective, on the other hand, does not deny

that teachers have substantial influence over some issues of classroom instruction. Their contribution is to broaden the focus and to draw attention to the importance of the school-wide zone. They hold that teachers ought to have input into a school's allocative, planning and strategic policies. Hence, when analyzing how centralized or decentralized schools are, they commonly ask, how much say do faculties have over school-wide policy matters outside of classrooms? They find very little teacher influence and much administrative discretion over policy, resource distribution and planning and, hence, conclude that schools are overly centralized (e.g. Rosenholtz 1989; Bacharach et al. 1988; Conley and Cooper 1991; Shedd and Bacharach 1991)

FIGURE 1

Conventional Zone View of the Division of Labor and Control within Schools

Zones	Group Controlling
Within-the-Classroom Zone Instruction	Teachers
School-wide Zone Allocation and Coordination	Administrators

The different conclusions of the two groups of researchers are, to an important extent, a result of their different emphases. Each draws attention to different types of activities and different levels of analysis. But, notably, both agree on the existing division of labor and control within schools: "Schools are marked by a 'traditional influence pattern' in which decisions are differentiated by locale and position ...administrators make strategic decisions outside of classrooms and teachers make operational decisions inside of classrooms" (Conley 1991, pp. 237-8).

Moreover, and the central point here is that, both accept an overly

narrow view of the educational and productive core of schools. When it comes to operationalizing the latter concept, most assume the core is limited to the classroom and most emphasize academic instruction. This focus underemphasizes some of the most important educational activities transpiring within classrooms and across schools.

Beginning with the classic social scientific studies of education (Dewey 1902; Durkheim 1925; Sorokin 1927; Waller 1932) continuing through Parsons (1959) and related educational researchers (e.g. Henry 1965; Dreeben 1968; Jackson 1968), and up to more recent revisionist and critical analysts of schools (e.g. Bowles and Gintis 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Giroux 1982; Apple 1982), investigators have long held that the major purpose of educational organizations lies in their social and institutional functions. Moreover, some have argued that this social role is expanding, as schools are being increasingly called upon to accept tasks once solely reserved for parents, churches and communities (e.g. Coleman and Hoffer 1987).

That is, the most important task of schools is the production of citizens and the reproduction of social order. This involves two overlapping activities - socialization and sorting. The first involves the inculcation of societal norms, beliefs, behaviors and roles. The second involves differentiation or the reproduction of societal patterns of stratification.

This line of education theory draws attention to the extent that what students learn in schools is governed as much by school social relations as by the content of the curriculum. Much of this social dimension is implicit, informal and unstated, prompting observers to often use the term "hidden curriculum" to refer to the norms, values and behaviors transmitted to students.

Despite this theoretical context, however, much empirical research in

education, including that concerned with school control, adopts a far narrower focus - classroom academic instruction and, by extension, student academic performance, as measured on mass-produced standardized tests. Academic instruction and performance are, of course, integrally related to the socialization and sorting processes in schools. But, instruction is also a decidedly distinct activity from the inculcation of behavioral norms and the classification of students into hierarchies of tracks. School control researchers usually have not directly specified, nor examined, who controls the behavioral, social and normative dimensions of school educational processes. Instead, researchers, almost without exception, tend to emphasize the degree of teacher control over activities commonly associated with formal academic instruction, such as the selection of instructional texts and methods.

The example of the control of student behavioral disciplinary policy provides an illustration of this underemphasis on school social functions. Decisions concerning student discipline are typically regarded as of lesser importance than those concerned with instruction. But, classroom order is fundamental - without the maintenance of some degree of student discipline, instructional processes cannot proceed at all. Student discipline is, however, not simply a necessary prerequisite for the adequate enactment of the ostensibly more important instructional activities. Discipline is at the heart of school socialization (cf. Durkheim 1925). In essence, discipline is an issue of which and whose set of values are to dominate school life - one of the most crucial educational activities transpiring within classrooms and schools. Typically, this involves conflict between competing behavioral and moral codes - often revolving around issues of class and race (e.g. Bowles and Gintis 1976; Giroux 1982; Apple 1982; Grant 1988).

The above discussion suggests that, in order to offer both a broader and more elaborated view of organizational control in schools, it is necessary to distinguish among the different types of activities and functions of the educational core in schools. The analysis below adopts this alternative; it separately examines control over the dimensions of instruction, tracking and discipline.

B.) Evaluating Organizational Control in Schools

Besides assessing who controls decisions and policies concerned with key activities, research on organizational control also usually attempts to evaluate what difference the degree of centralization or decentralization makes for those who work within the organization. Such evaluations typically focus on the effects of the distribution of control on organizational behavior within a setting. That is, do the structural arrangements of an organization aid or hinder how members perform?

These questions are particularly complex for those industries and organizations, like schools, in which interaction among organization participants is itself the "technology" and "product" of the organization. For example, in many service and public sector organizations the production process involves individuals working, not with raw materials or objects, but with other individuals. In such settings, employee control and its evaluation can be fraught with difficulties. In the first place, the means and ends of "people work" are often ambiguous. It can be unclear as to what the final product is or should be and what is the best technology to achieve it. Moreover, because such technologies are themselves sets of relationships among individuals, such organizations are doubly dependent on the active cooperation of their three key groups - clients, employees and management. As a result, analysts of work and

organization have long argued that in such cases the character of social relations within the organization becomes of crucial importance (e.g. Likert 1967; Ouchi and Wilkins 1985). This appears to be especially true for educational organizations.

The goal of schools is to promote growth in children. In order to assess how well schools achieve this goal, that is to assess their performance, educational analysts often turn to student scores on mass-produced standardized tests. However, even those who advocate such performance measures, concede them to be less than ideal (e.g. Linn et al. 1991). These tests are designed to measure students' acquisition of particular kinds of knowledge and facts, but are questionable measures of the success of the fundamental social and institutional goals of schools. Just as academic instruction is not the only important core educational activity within schools, academic achievement is not the only important kind of educational growth of children in schools.

It is not surprising then that school researchers have also often focussed on the importance of less tangible aspects of schools: social organization (e.g. Rosenholtz 1989), school community (e.g. Coleman and Hoffer 1987), the ethos of schools (Grant 1988); and school climate (e.g. Anderson 1982). At the heart of these concepts is the degree of cooperation, cohesion and consensus among those within schools. The character of the social relations among key groups within schools is important not simply because it may be related to student academic achievement, but because it is, itself, at the crux of the social functions and goals of schools. Indeed, in a fundamental way, in institutions such as schools, where cultural transmission is the goal, the cohesion of social relations among the key groups <u>is</u> organizational performance. This conclusion is increasingly born out by research on effective schools, which, for instance,

has found that one of the most important indicators of the successful school is the presence of a "shared moral order" (e.g. Grant 1988; Kirst 1989; Bryk et al. 1990).

Emphasis on the importance of organizational cohesion and coherence in schools also holds for both of the two polar perspectives of control. Their contribution has been to draw attention to the importance of levels of control for explaining the behavior of those in schools. Where they disagree is not only with what the character of this structure is, as we have seen, but also with its consequences for these internal conditions. (see Figure 2)

While some in the traditional control perspective have drawn attention to the positive consequences of decentralization for the long term success and survival of schools (e.g. Meyer and Scott 1983), most research in this vein has found decentralization to be detrimental to the overall performance of the organization. In this view, a lack of adequate organizational control is just one characteristic, albeit a salient one, of a larger syndrome of looseness that plagues school organization. Schools also exhibit a lack of consensus, cooperation, coordination and communication among members (Firestone 1985).

In this view, increases in teacher control and influence over key activities foster decreases in consensus, coordination and cooperation among teachers and administrators. Teachers largely teach what they choose "behind the closed doors of their classrooms." Moreover, decentralization of decision making undermines the authority of principals and leads to tension between administrators and faculty. Inconsistencies between goals and programs are pervasive. The resulting plethora of incoherent, inconsistent standards, programs and procedures fosters student frustration, confusion and alienation. Analysts have concluded that this overall loose coupling in schools is a major

source of poor organization performance and of the widespread public stereotype that schools are inefficient and ineffective enterprises (Rowan 1990).

FIGURE 2

Two Views of Organizational Control and Behavior in Schools

Organizational Control in Schools	->	Organizational Behavior in Schools
Traditional Control Perspective:		
Schools as Organized Anarchies: Low levels of Control, Decentralized Decision Making, Highly Autonomous Teachers	->	Low Levels of Cooperation, Consensus and Cohesion
New Empowerment Perspective:		
Schools as Factories: High Levels of Control, Centralized Decision Making, Highly Disempowered Faculties	->	Low levels of Cooperation, Consensus and Cohesion

On the other hand, the newer disempowerment view has held that it is centralization that is detrimental to the environment inside schools. This view typically adopts an applied focus and a stance sympathetic to teachers. It holds that an abundance of central control is just one characteristic, albeit a salient one, of a larger syndrome of poor organizational conditions that plagues the teaching occupation. Schools also often exhibit a lack of adequate resources and support for teachers, and appropriate leadership from administrators. These researchers conclude that factory-like conditions in schools undermine teacher commitment, collegiality and cooperation. In this view, changing these conditions

is both humane and also pragmatic. Better organizational conditions, such as increased teacher decision-making influence, make for improved relations between administrators and teachers, enhanced teacher commitment and, hence, improved organizational performance (e.g. Rosenholtz 1989; Bacharach et al. 1988; Conley and Cooper 1991; Shedd and Bacharach 1991).

Hence, both prominent viewpoints of school organization concur that organizational control effects the behavior and performance of those in schools. Where they differ is in which set of organizational needs is most important. For the traditional perspective, the underlying emphasis is on the need for organizational control, accountability and consistency. On the other hand, for the empowerment view, the underlying emphasis is on the need for teacher autonomy, professionalism, and empowerment. The differing emphases of each viewpoint arise from their different theoretical persuasions. There are, however, few efforts to empirically test which set of needs and, hence, which perspective is more valid for schools. Moreover, beyond a general test, there has also been little effort to distinguish and specify which areas of organizational control have what effects on which sets of social relations within schools.

The analysis below addresses these issues and the debate over appropriate school organization by empirically examining the relationship between different dimensions of control in schools and three distinct domains of behavior and interaction in schools - relations between students and staff, those among teachers and those between teachers and administrators.

2. DATA AND METHODS

The source of data for this investigation is the nationally representative 1988 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) conducted by the National Center for

Education Statistics (NCES), the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Education. This is one of the largest and most comprehensive data sources available on the organizational conditions of schools.

The U.S. Census Bureau collected these data for NCES in 1988 from a random sample stratified by state, sector and school level. Throughout, this analysis uses data weighted to compensate for the over- and under-sampling of the complex stratified survey design. Each observation is weighted by the inverse of its probability of selection in order to obtain unbiased estimates of population parameters. The survey constructed separate questionnaires for the principals of the schools sampled, for administrators of the central school or governing board of each sample school and for faculty within each sample school. Within each school, from three to twenty teachers (mean of four) were randomly sampled, depending on level, size and sector. The response rate was quite high: 86 percent for public school teachers; 79 percent for private school teachers; 94 percent for public school administrators and 79 percent for private school administrators.[1]

This analysis focusses on secondary schools. The sample contains 24,480 teachers and 5,292 principals from the same number of schools. Approximately 17 percent of the school sample (889) is in the private sector. And because private schools are usually smaller, approximately 9 percent of these teachers (2,158) are employed in the private sector.

The units of analysis in this study are schools and not individuals in schools. The data either represent school-level responses, as in the case of information collected from administrators, or represent school-wide means, as in the case of information collected from teachers. Aggregating individual-level data in this way, of course, underemphasizes within-school diversity and

overlooks inter-relationships between school-level and individual-level variables, but it allows the empirical analysis to narrow its focus to the topic of interest - the consequences of organizational control in schools.[2]

A.) Measures of Organizational Control in Schools

The topic that lies at the crux of the debate over organizational control in schools, and that provides the empirical focus of this investigation is the level of control and influence exercised by teachers within schools. Hence, in this investigation, a decentralized school is one in which teachers exercise high levels of control or decision-making influence over key activities concerned with core educational processes in their schools. A centralized school, on the other hand, is one in which teachers exercise low levels of control or decision-making influence over such activities.

This investigation's measures of teacher control are drawn from a series of items in the SASS teacher questionnaire that asked respondents to report their control and influence over a number of core educational activities. All questions used a six point scale from "none" to "complete control" or to "a great deal." From the available questionnaire items, composite measures representing each of the three dimensions of the educational core were developed (instruction, tracking, discipline). Means (weighted) and standard deviations of these indices of teacher control are summarized in Table 1. They indicate that teacher control varies widely, depending on which dimension of the core is being examined. Notably, teachers are reported to have more control over instruction - the most common focus of research and policy on school organization. On the other hand, teachers report less control over either of the, often overlooked but crucial, social dimensions of the educational core.

B.) Measures of Organizational Conflict in Schools

TABLE 1

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF MEASURES OF TEACHER CONTROL SCHOOL CONFLICT, AND SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

	MEAN	S.D.
TEACHER CONTROL (scale:1-6)		
Instruction Dimension	4.91	.61
Tracking Dimension	3.14	1.17
Discipline Dimension	4.24	.80
SCHOOL CONFLICT (scale:1-4)		
Conflict Between Staff and Students (faculty reports)	2.09	.50
Conflict Between Staff and Students (principals' reports)	1.82	.48
Disunity Among Faculty	2.04	.47
Disunity between Faculty and Administrators	1.91	.44
SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS		
Private (=1)	.18	
School Size	587	567
Suburban (=1)	.18	
Urban (=1)	.23	
% Minority Students	21	27
% Poverty Students	24	24
School Starting Salary	17,057	2,964
% Junior Faculty	12	12
% Faculty with Masters Degree	47	29

In addition to collecting information on control, SASS also obtained respondents' reports of the degree of cooperation and consensus or, alternatively, the degree of conflict and disunity among students, faculty and administrators within schools. This investigation uses as dependent variables three indices of the character of the relations among these key groups within schools, developed from relevant questionnaire items. These three are: conflict between staff and students, disunity among faculty, and disunity between faculty and administrators.[3]

Conflict between Staff and Students

This variable assesses the level of conflict in the relationship between staff and students. It refers to the degree to which students are alienated from, do not cooperate with, or actively disrupt, the manner by which schools are operated. Two measures of student-staff conflict are used. One represents teachers' perceptions. The other represents principals' perceptions. Each included nine identical questionnaire items concerned with student behavior.

Disunity Among Faculty

This variable assesses the degree of cohesion and consensus within a school's faculty. It characterizes faculties along a continuum from those which function as coordinated teams to those which act as fragmented collections of individuals. This measure is based on three questionnaire items from the teacher survey.

Disunity Between Faculty and Administrators

This variable assesses the quality of leadership provided by school administrators. It characterizes the faculty/administrator relationship along a scale from those exhibiting communication, cooperation and support to those exhibiting distrust and friction. This measure is based on nine questionnaire

items from the teacher survey.

All of these items were answered on a four point scale, with four indicating a serious level of conflict. The indices are also summarized in Table 1.

While respondents' reports of conditions in their workplaces are commonly used in organizational research, it is necessary to acknowledge several inherent limitations to such data. This approach treats organizational members as informants of conditions in their organizational settings. One of the advantages of this approach is that the information on organizational conditions comes from those who most closely experience it. But, because such data represent members' perceptions, these responses are, by definition, subjective attributions. Different respondents may have different experiences and perspectives and, hence, wide variation in their perceptions can be expected. Moreover, particular respondents may be particularly susceptible to systematic under- or over-reporting of organizational conditions.

One means of addressing these limitations is by utilizing data from a range of respondents representing different roles and perspectives in the organization. In this case, SASS provides data from a random sample of teachers in each school and also from both teachers and the school's principal for the items on student misbehavior. As expected, teachers and principals differ in their reports of student misbehavior, as displayed in Table 1. However, the two indices are strongly correlated ($r = .6$)

C.) Measures of School, Student-body and Staff Characteristics

Along with organizational control there are, of course, numerous other factors that could account for organizational behavior in schools. Previous research suggests that there are, in fact, important differences in the

organizational processes in schools and these differences are related to the characteristics of the school, its community setting, the type of students enrolled (e.g. Anderson 1982; Pallas 1988; Rowan et al. 1991; Bryk et al. 1990). Moreover, it is important to control for some of the background characteristics of the teacher-respondents. Independent variables representing a number of these background characteristics available from SASS, include: sector (public, private); size of school (enrollment); school community (rural or small town, suburban, urban); percent of student body from poverty-level families; percent of student body that is minority; the school's normal starting teacher salary; the percent of beginning teachers in the school's faculty; and the percent of faculty that has obtained a degree beyond the bachelor's degree.[4]

3. ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT IN HIGH SCHOOLS

The objective of this section is to investigate the relationship of teacher control over the three core dimensions to the four domains of school conflict, while controlling for the effects of the background characteristics of schools, students and staffs. The results of multiple regression analysis are displayed in Tables 2A and B. The discussion below begins with student conflict.

As indicated in the first column of Table 2A, many of the characteristics of particular schools and of their students are related to the degree of student conflict reported in those schools. This is not surprising. Research on student attitudes and behavior in schools, like that on student academic achievement, has long emphasized the importance of the social-economic background of students and the school community in explaining differences in how students interact with school staff and in the level of student alienation and resistance within schools (e.g. Anderson 1982; Grant 1988; Apple 1982; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Giroux 1982).

TABLE 2A

FACTORS PREDICTING CONFLICT WITHIN SCHOOLS

	Conflict Between Staff and Students (Faculty reports)		Conflict Between Staff and Students (Principals' reports)	
SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS				
Private (=1)	-.25	(.023)**	-.2	(.03)**
Size (in hundreds)	.02	(.001)**	.03	(.002)**
Suburban (=1)	-.06	(.02)**	-.09	(.02)**
Urban (=1)	.05	(.02)**	-.003	(.02)
% Minority Students	.002	(.002)**	.003	(.0003)**
% Poverty Students	.001	(.001)**	-.0005	(.0003)
School Starting Salary (in thousands)	.01	(.003)**	.008	(.003)**
% Junior Faculty	-.0002	(.0005)	.001	(.0005)
% Faculty with Masters Degree	.0005	(.0002)	.0006	(.0002)**
TEACHER CONTROL				
Instruction Dimension	.05	(.012)**	.07	(.01)**
Tracking Dimension	-.03	(.006)**	-.02	(.007)**
Discipline Dimension	-.18	(.01)**	-.07	(.01)**
Intercept	2.39**		1.44**	
R^2	.37		.22	
N	4,201		4,131	

(standard errors in parentheses)
(** $p < .01$)

School sector and size, in particular, stand out; other things being equal, in private schools and in smaller schools, respondents report less conflict with students. Moreover, in schools with less minority students, in schools with less poverty-level students, in suburban schools, and in schools with lower starting salaries, faculty report slightly less conflict with students.

The question of particular interest here is: does teacher control also have an association with reported student misbehavior and is this association independent of the setting of the school? This is tested in the bottom portion of the first column.

The results suggest that teacher control does indeed have an independent impact on student behavior but, the degree and direction of the relationship very much depends on the dimension of control examined. Just as a different picture of the level of control emerges, depending on the dimension examined, a different picture of the consequences of control emerges, depending on the dimension examined.

On the one hand, faculty influence over instruction is directly associated with reported student conflict. That is, as the control of teachers over instructional activities increases, levels of student conflict also increase. This is, however, a weak relationship.

In contrast, teacher control concerned with the two social dimensions is inversely related to levels of student conflict reported in schools. For both tracking and discipline activities, as teacher control increases, the amount of perceived student disruption decreases. Indeed, of all the variables measured, faculty control over decisions concerned with discipline is among the strongest predictors of reduced student conflict.

Of course, it could be argued that these relationships between control and

conflict might be distorted by respondent bias. For example, teachers with more control might tend to be more satisfied with students, regardless of levels of misbehavior. Or, highly satisfied (or dissatisfied) teachers might tend to give an overly positive (or negative) account of both their influence and of student behavior.

The finding that teachers report distinct differences in influence and control across different types of decisions and policies does suggest, however, that the respondents are not vaguely generalizing. Clearly, control of some kinds of activities is more crucial than others and this shows up in both their levels reported and in their relationships to conflict.

But, it is also possible to more systematically control for the potential of bias by contrasting the reports of different sets of respondents. The second column of Table 2A does this by inserting principals' reports of student misbehavior as the dependent variable. It answers the question: do the above-described relationships between conflict and faculty control hold up if we exchange principals' reports of student conflict for those of teachers?

The pattern of results are similar, but the relationships are, for the most part, weaker than those based on teachers' reports of misbehavior. As before, student conflict varies depending on school sector, size, the percent of minority students, suburbanicity and school salary levels. In addition, the proportion of teachers with advanced degrees is directly related to student conflict. But, these are not strong relationships.

As before, the impact of teacher control depends on the dimension examined. Control of tracking and discipline activities shows an inverse association with conflict. But, these relationships are weaker than in the former model. Moreover, teacher control over instruction is again directly associated

with conflict. But, notably, in this case, the relationship is slightly stronger.

Overall, the results displayed in columns 1 and 2 of Table 2A must be interpreted with some caution. In each case, only a portion of the variance in reported misbehavior is accounted for by the model. This is to be expected. There are many factors effecting student conflict, of which only a sample are measured here. Moreover, none of the individual relationships can be described as of great strength. But, despite these limitations, the models clearly indicate the relative importance of increasing teacher control over different kinds of issues in the technical core for predicting decreases in behavioral problems with students. In schools where faculty report more control over the social dimensions, both faculty and administrators report significantly less student misbehavior. But, in schools where faculty report more control over the instruction dimension, both faculty and administrators report slightly more student misbehavior. Of particular importance is teacher control over decisions and policies concerned with discipline.

The next portion of the analysis concerns the association of teacher control with teachers' relations with their other colleagues and with their principals. Would an increase in the level of reported faculty influence lead to solidarity, consensus and cooperation or competition and division among staff? And, how might this degree of collegiality or disunity differ among different schools? Table 2B displays the analysis of these relationships.

The results show that levels of cohesion are related to the measured characteristics of schools. In private schools, in smaller schools, in schools with lower starting salaries and in schools with a greater proportion of beginning teachers, respondents report more solidarity with fellow teachers. On the other hand, in larger schools and schools with more minority students, respondents

TABLE 2B

FACTORS PREDICTING CONFLICT WITHIN SCHOOLS

	Disunity Among Faculty		Disunity Between Faculty and Administrators	
SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS				
Private (=1)	-.18	(.08)**	-.01	(.02)
Size (in hundreds)	.01	(.024)**	-.005	(.001)**
Suburban (=1)	-.02	(.02)	-.02	(.017)
Urban (=1)	.02	(.019)	.02	(.017)
% Minority Students	-.001	(.0003)	-.001	(.0003)**
% Poverty Students	-.001	(.0003)	-.00004	(.0003)
School Starting Salary (in thousands)	.01	(.003)**	.005	(.002)
% Junior Faculty	-.002	(.0005)**	-.0005	(.0005)
% Faculty with Masters Degree	-.0003	(.0002)	-.00005	(.0002)
TEACHER CONTROL				
Instruction Dimension	.03	(.012)	.002	(.01)
Tracking Dimension	-.04	(.006)**	-.05	(.0057)**
Discipline Dimension	-.22	(.01)**	-.27	(.009)**
Intercept	2.88**		3.19**	
R^2	.28		.31	
N	4,199		4,200	

(standard errors in parentheses)
(** $p < .01$)

report better relations with their principals. None of these, however, are strong relationships.

Organizational control, however, has a substantial impact on staff cohesion. But, again it depends on the dimension of control examined. The relationship of control over instructional issues to staff disunity is not statistically significant. As before, it is control over the school's social dimensions that makes the largest difference. By far, the strongest predictor of staff unity is faculty influence over school discipline policy.

Hence, the value of carefully distinguishing between dimensions within schools is now further corroborated and the traditional emphasis on classroom academic instruction as the crucial and primary educational activity of schools and teachers is further called into question.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of this investigation suggest that levels of organizational control and organizational centralization make an important difference for the behavior and performance of those within schools. In particular, the degree of influence and control teachers are reported to exercise is related to the degree of reported cohesion or conflict between each of three key groups - students, faculty and administrators - within schools.

This association, however, shows significant variation, depending upon the areas of control examined. Notably, although faculty report greater influence over decisions concerned with curriculum and instruction, such as the selection of course textbooks, topics, materials and teaching techniques, control over these decisions exhibits less association with a cohesive organization and a positive working environment. Indeed, the opposite is at times true; increased teacher control over decisions concerned with instructional activities is

associated with less cooperation and more misbehavior from students. But, it is for those decisions that are most fundamentally social - where the educational process involves the selection, maintenance and transmission of values, behaviors and norms - that centralization shows the strongest association with disorder within schools.

Of course, other characteristics of schools have significant effects on levels of reported disorder. In particular, large, public schools more often are reported to exhibit conflict. Small, private schools are less often so. But, this analysis suggests that the lower frequency of problems in small, private schools is, to an important extent, due to their less centralized organizational structures. That is, decentralized schools tend to be less adversarial and disordered workplaces.

Finally, what do these results suggest for the two polar views of organizational control in schools, introduced earlier. In the first place, the data indicate that the traditional control view is partly correct in viewing schools as "loosely coupled systems" and "organized anarchies." Teachers in many schools do report some degree of control and influence over instructional issues - the empirical focus of much of this research. Moreover, teachers in many schools do report extensive problems of cohesion, cooperation and consensus. Finally, some kinds of disorder are slightly related to some kinds of decentralization in schools.

On the other hand, the newer view of school control concerned with teacher professionalization and empowerment is also correct in finding schools to be centralized. Teachers in many schools do report little control and influence over many important issues and policies across schools. Moreover, important internal problems of schools are associated with organizational centralization and

a lack of teacher input and power.

The differing conclusions of each viewpoint partly derive from implicit differences in emphasis. Each viewpoint begins with contrasting assumptions concerning how to both assess and evaluate organizational control in schools and each subsequently arrives at opposing views of how controlled schools both are and should be. The analysis here suggests that both are partly correct, but that neither goes far enough. The central finding of this analysis is that both views have underemphasized one of the most telling sites of centralized control and a leading predictor of internal disorder and conflict in schools - who controls the behavioral and normative dimension of school process.

This finding has direct implications for policy and practice. School restructuring, site-based management and decentralization efforts usually focus on expanding teacher input into either instructional activities, such as curricular innovation, or into administrative activities, such as hiring and budget allocation (David 1989). In contrast, such reforms rarely focus on a similar expansion of teacher influence over the social functions of schools.

The following anecdote provides an illustration of the importance of control of school disciplinary policies. This example is drawn from fieldwork associated with this study of school organization. In this component I conducted interviews with teachers and principals in four high schools in or near a large city in the eastern U.S.[5]

In one of the schools the staff described a conflict that arose over the development of a new student fashion - wearing hats in school. This school, which I will label Urban High, is a large, urban, less-affluent, public high school, grades nine through twelve, with a largely minority student body,

located in the city school district. This case is not atypical.

When this particular student fad - wearing hats - appeared, it did not actually violate an existing school rule, but it did effectively cross existing normative boundaries for student attire at Urban High. Hence, the school administration decided it necessary to respond with a new rule explicitly banning the wearing of hats. The administration then moved to arrange a faculty meeting to announce the rule and request faculty assistance in enforcement. At that point, the faculty were asked their opinions on the new rule. The resulting problems of enforcement provide a concrete illustration parallel to the above-described statistical relationships between influence over discipline policy and lack of cohesion among organizational members.

From the beginning, the new rule banning hats did not have complete support from the faculty. Some strongly favored it. Some were willing to go along with it. Some opposed it. As a result, numerous faculty neglected to enforce the rule, especially those who opposed it. This neglect generated conflict between members of the faculty themselves, between teachers and students and between teachers and administrators.

Administrators, now in the position of having to see that all faculty enforced the new rule, resented those who did not. In addition, faculty who did enforce the rule also resented those who did not share the burden. Rightfully so, they were well aware of the problems resulting from inconsistent enforcement. On the other hand, those faculty who felt the rule unnecessary, resented being pressured to enforce it. Finally, many teachers, whether they supported or opposed the rule, resented the negative consequences of enforcement for their relations with their students. The resulting dissension was unquestionably counterproductive for school life at Urban High.

Rules for student behavior, such as the wearing of hats, are not trivial. At issue is what the school social norms are to be and who is to make such decisions. This is a key issue of organizational control. The point here is that faculty influence, or the lack of it, over the content of these rules is consequential. Neither this anecdote, nor the statistical models indicate that increasing faculty control over such decisions will eliminate these domains of conflict. But, both do indicate that it would reduce conflict. This analysis suggests restructuring reforms ought to include such social policies in efforts to decentralize decision making. But, the analysis does not suggest that decentralizing the determination of social issues will be easy. It is precisely because school socialization and tracking are non-trivial societal functions, that they are of great concern to parents, students, school administrations and larger constituencies.

NOTES

1. SASS data tapes, survey questionnaires and user's manuals are available from NCES, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave., Washington, D.C. 20208-5641. For information concerning the survey design and sample estimation of SASS see Kaufman (1991). For an extensive report, summarizing the items used in this investigation and providing an overview of the entire survey see Schools and Staffing in the U.S.: A Statistical Profile, 1987-88 (Choy et al. 1992).

2. The data used in this investigation are multi-level. They represent responses collected from both individual teachers within schools and from administrators of those schools. There has been a great deal of debate concerning the appropriate level of analysis for such data (e.g. Pfeffer 1982, pp. 12-18; Bidwell and Kasarda 1980; Rowan et al. 1991). As a result, several multi-level statistical techniques and packages have been recently developed specifically to capitalize on the nested or hierarchical nature of such data (see for instance, Bryk and Raudenbush 1992).

Background analyses for this investigation using all three approaches (individual, school and multi-level) indicate that, surprisingly, there are not appreciable differences in their results for the questions addressed here. As a result, this investigation will be couched at a school level of analysis because that most closely matches the level of the theoretical questions addressed. School-wide conditions are represented by both principals' reports and the means of teachers' reports for those schools. Teacher weights were used in aggregating the teacher scores. School weights were used in the analysis itself.

This investigation, however, does not assume that schools are uniform entities. As in many previous analyses of school organization (e.g. Pallas 1988; Lee et al. 1991; Rowan et al. 1991), differences exist in teachers' reports of

organizational conditions, but these are only weakly related to commonly measured teacher characteristics (gender, race, experience, education, subject taught, salary). This suggests there is both actual variation in the levels of conflict and control experienced by teachers within schools and also some degree of measurement error.

But, background analysis also indicates substantial variation among schools for the variables of interest here. This suggests that both conflict and control are also collective properties of schools. The relationship between these organization-wide properties provides the focus of this investigation.

3. Construction of the composite measures of control and conflict involved three steps. Since, the measures were created on the basis of theoretical concepts. all questionnaire items that conceptually fit the theoretical constructs for control and conflict were first selected. Second, Chronbach's alpha coefficients for each of item groups were obtained. Items with low correlations were dropped. Third, means of the remaining questionnaire items comprising each index were calculated. Because high scores for some questionnaire items used in the conflict indices represented the existence of problems and for others the opposite, the latter were first reverse coded in order to be consistent.

The indices are:

Teacher control (instruction dimension) - (alpha = .78) - five items: establishing curriculum; selecting textbooks and other instructional materials; selecting content, topics and skills to be taught; selecting teaching techniques; determining the amount of homework to be assigned.

Teacher Control (tracking dimension) - one item - setting policy on grouping students in classes by ability.

Teacher Control (discipline dimension) - (alpha = .63) - two items -

determining discipline policy; disciplining students in classrooms.

Faculty/student conflict (faculty reports) - (alpha = .91) - nine items from the teacher survey: tardiness; class cutting; absenteeism; robbery; vandalism; use of alcohol; drug abuse; physical abuse of teachers and verbal abuse of teachers.

Faculty/student conflict (principals' reports) - (alpha = .82) - nine items from the principals' survey: tardiness; class cutting; absenteeism; robbery; vandalism; use of alcohol; drug abuse; physical abuse of teachers and verbal abuse of teachers.

Faculty/faculty disunity - (alpha = .73) - three items from the teacher survey: consistency of rule enforcement by teachers in this school; consensus about the central mission of the school; cooperative effort among staff members.

Faculty/administration disunity - (alpha = .77) - nine items from the teacher survey: fairness of teacher evaluation; principal's expectations communicated; administrative support; availability of necessary materials; resources available; principal backs up; frequency of communication about instructional practices; communication about kind of school wanted; clarity of goals and priorities for school.

4. Proportion of student body from poverty backgrounds is based on administrators' reports of the number of students eligible for the federal free lunch program. This is an underestimate because not all students who are eligible identify themselves as such, and in the private sector not all schools participate in federal programs.

Minority students here includes all those other than white, non-hispanic students.

Proportion of faculty that are beginning or junior refers to those who

have taught for less than three years. In many public schools, this is synonymous with lack of tenure because a continuing contract is normally obtained after three years of service.

Public/private sector and rural-small town/suburban/urban types of community have been dichotomized into dummy variables for the analysis.

5. I have reported this research elsewhere in detail - see Ingersoll, forthcoming.

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